Jl S. Afr. Bot. 47 (3): 567–571 (1981)

ALOE MEYERI VAN JAARSVELD: A NEW ALOE FROM THE NORTH-WEST CAPE (R.S.A.)*

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Abstract

A new *Aloe* species (Liliaceae) is described from the north-western Cape.

Uittreksel

ALOE MEYERI VAN JAARSVELD: 'N NUWE ALOE VANAF NOORD-WES KAAP (R.S.A.)

'n Nuwe *Aloe*-soort (Liliaceae) vanaf noordwes-Kaap word beskryf.

Aloe meyeri E. J. van Jaarsveld, sp. nova.; a *A. mitriformis* Miller differt, statura parva, habitu dependulo, foliis lanceolatis-acuminatis, inflorescentia simplici pendula-recurva, et floribus subclavatis dimidio minoribus.

Type: South Africa: Cape Province—2817 (Tatasberg): Rosyntjieberg, 500 m south of Devil's Tooth (-AD), *van Jaarsveld 6137* (NBG, holo.!)

Plants hanging from vertical south-facing cliffs. *Stems* up to 1 m long, up to 40 mm in diam., grey; old stems longitudinally fissured; simple or branched from the base or sometimes with offshoots along stem; only apical part foliated. *Rosette* up to 26 mm in diam., hanging downwards and not ascending, old dry leaves persistent for a short length. *Leaves* glaucous, narrowly lanceolate acuminate up to 200 mm long and 35 mm in diam., erectly spreading, sometimes reddish-brown tinged, leathery, rosulate and basally sheathing, upper and lower surface striate at base, upper surface slightly channelled at base, more distinctly so towards the apex. Lower surface obscurely keeled towards the apex. Margins armed with small white deltoid teeth 2 × 1 mm, 5–8 mm apart. Leaf sap drying orange-yellow. *Inflorescence* simple or rarely branched 150–250 mm long, pendulous-recurved. Peduncle 5 mm wide at base, cylindrical with few sterile deltoid scarious acuminate bracts 4 mm wide at base and up to 10 mm long; raceme capitate, rounded ± 70 mm long and ± 80 mm in diam., the buds orange-red, green-tipped, horizontally spreading to subpendulous, open perianth pendulous

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*The Editor-in-Chief acknowledges with gratitude the financial assistance of the Botanical Society of South Africa with the colour reproduction of Figure 1.

Accepted for publication 5th March, 1981.

orange-red and green tipped. Bracts deltoid acuminate 3 × 5 mm. Pedicel 20 mm long. *Perianth* 20 mm long, cylindrical, subclavate slightly curved; obtuse to subacute at base, 3,5 mm in diam., proximally, widening to 4–5 mm near mouth; outer segments free to the base, apices subacute to obtuse, slightly spreading; inner segments much broader, subspathulate, apices rounded to subacute and spreading. Filaments yellow, the three inner lengthening before the three outer, flattened at base, up to 3 mm exserted beyond mouth. *Stigma* not protruding, or sometimes just exserted at mouth. *Ovary* green, 4 mm long and 2 mm wide.

Flowering period: December to February.

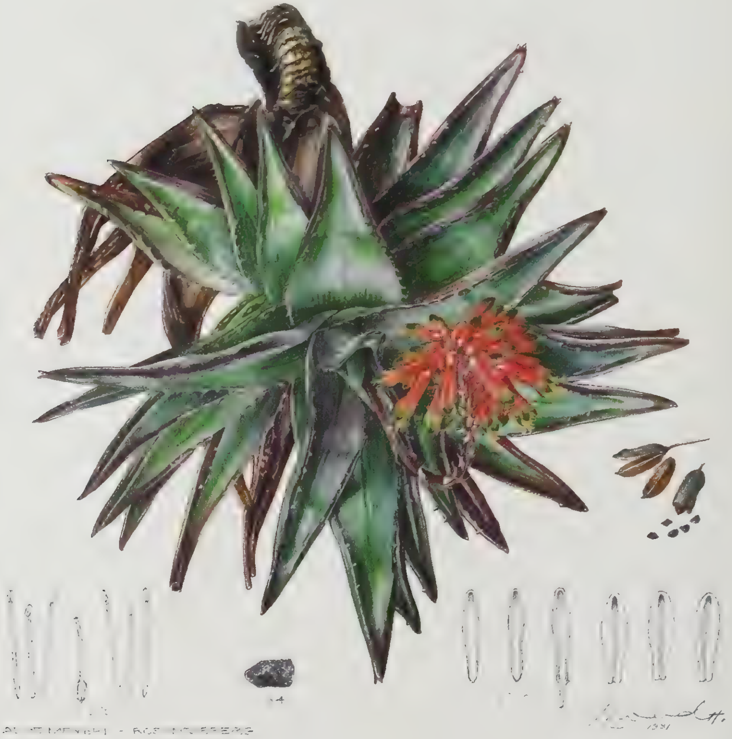

FIG. 1.
Aloe meyeri van Jaarsveld, sp. nov.

DISTRIBUTION

Confined to the Rosyntjieberg mountain-range in the north-east Richtersveld and just entering South West Africa. This interesting mountain-range runs east-west for approximately 25 km and just enters South West Africa in the east where *Aloe meyeri* also occurs on the mountain peaks east of Gorgons Head on the South West African side of the range.

HABITAT

It occurs on steep vertical south-facing upper slopes in crevices of quartzitic rock. The plants are scattered and not very common.

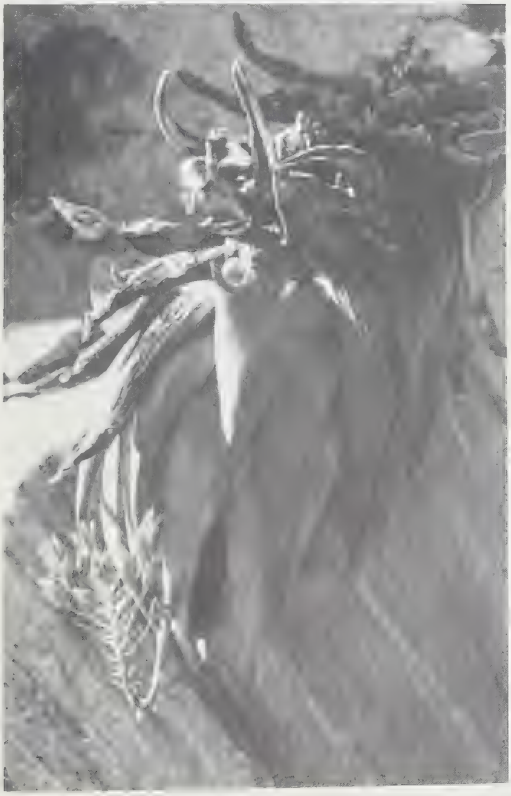

FIG. 2.
Aloe meyeri van Jaarsveld, sp. nov. Habitat.

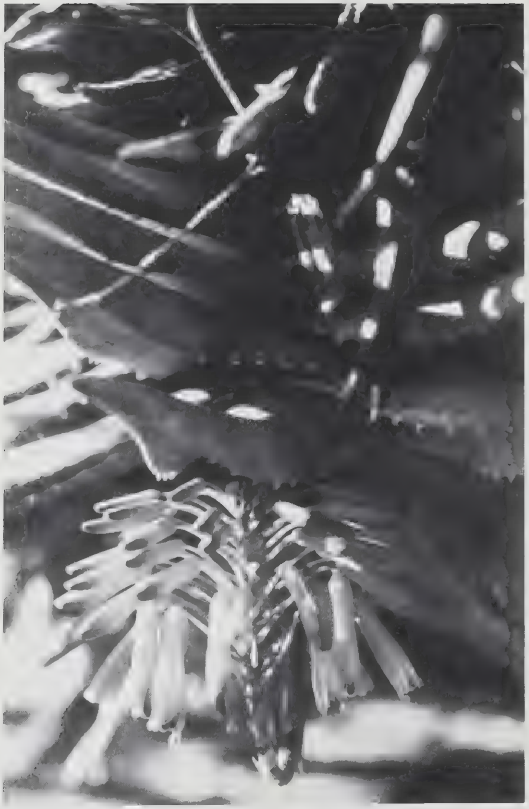

Fig. 3. Inflorescence life size.

DISCUSSION

Aloe meyeri is most closely related to *Aloe mitriformis* Miller. It falls into the series Mitriformes (Reynolds, 1950) which includes *Aloe distans* Haw., *Aloe comptonii* Reynolds, *Aloe arenicola* Reynolds and *Aloe mitriformis* Miller.

This new aloe is at once distinguished from *Aloe mitriformis* by being a much smaller plant. The rosette is carried on the apical part of the stem and hangs downwards. The leathery leaves are lanceolate-acuminate and striate basally. The infloresence is simple (rarely branched), and pendulous-recurved. The subclavate corolla is shorter by half than in *Aloe mitriformis*. As with *A. mitriformis*, the leaves normally become drawn together in the dry season. According to present information, *A. meyeri* occurs only on the Rosyntjieberg mountain-range (north-west Cape) and is thus geographically isolated from *A. mitriformis* which is restricted to the south-west Cape.

This distinctive new aloe is named after the late Rev. G. Meyer of Steinkopf, who first collected it during September 1939, together with the late Mr. Hans Herre of Stellenbosch University. (Aloe Vol. **II** No. 1 pg. 18, March, 1973). The discovery was brought to the attention of the late Mr. N. S. Pillans and Dr. G. W. Reynolds but according to Hans Herre they considered its identity to be a hybrid, with *A. kapohliana* as a possible parent.

During the course of a collecting trip, on the 11th June 1980, together with Mr. Piet Drijhout of Stellenbosch, while in search of succulents and pelargoniums, the author inspected the upper south slopes of a quartz peak on the Rosyntjieberg and came across a population of this aloe and recognised it to be undescribed. Subsequently, the author came across an article by Hans Herre in Aloe (Vol. **II** No. 1 March, 1973) "Herinneringe van 'n besoek aan die Richtersveld", in which mention is made of the Rev. G. Meyer's prior discovery, in September, 1939, of the same aloe which is now described here as *Aloe meyeri*.

After our discovery on the 11th June, 1980, populations were found at several other localities on the Rosyntjieberg. John Patterson, a keen mountaineer and nature conservation student, found a population on the South West African side of the Rosyntjieberg, which is the most eastern distribution record.

The most northern record was established by Mr. Kobus Kritzinger, law enforcement officer at Springbok, for Cape Provincial Nature Conservation Department, who collected plants on Mount Terror, a northern outlier of the Rosyntjieberg.

Earlier this year the author, together with Mr. Deon Kotze of NBG, assisted by Mr. Piet van der Westhuizen and Mr. Kobus Kritzinger re-collected flowering material of the new aloe from which this account was prepared.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

(1) Dr. John Rourke is thanked for his help, encouragement and preparation of the Latin diagnosis.

(2) Mr. John Winter for encouragement and allowing the author to be away on the various field trips to the Richtersveld.

(3) Mr. Piet van der Westhuizen, Curator, Hester Malan Nature Reserve, Springbok, who very kindly took us with his Landrover and together with Mr. Kritzinger assisted in collecting the type material.

REFERENCES:

REYNOLDS, G. W. 1974. The Aloes of South Africa. Cape Town/Rotterdam: Balkema.